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USAID FOR GARY HANSEN AND JOHN SWALLOW

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SUBJECT: ARAB CIVITAS NETWORK ANNOUNCED IN AMMAN

1. SUMMARY: 25 REPRESENTATIVES FROM 8 ARAB COUNTRIES GATHERED AT JORDAN'S DEAD SEA MOVENPICK, NOVEMBER 1-4, 2002 TO ANNOUNCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL ARAB CIVITAS NETWORK TO BE BASED IN AMMAN. THE WORKSHOP, MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH AN AID WASHINGTON GRANT TO THE CENTER FOR CIVIC EDUCATION AND WITH PA AMMAN'S TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, SIGNALLED THE PARTICIPANTS' BELIEF IN THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN BUILDING SOCIETIES AND THE NEED FOR CREATING RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS EDUCATED IN THE FIELDS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIC EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY. WITH FURTHER FUNDING FROM USAID, ARAB CIVITAS AIMS TO LEAD CIVIC EDUCATION INITIATIVES IN THE ARAB WORLD. QUEEN RANIA EXTENDED HER PATRONAGE TO THE CONFERENCE AND WAS REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, DR. KHALED TOUQAN. AMBASSADOR GNEHM GAVE WELCOMING REMARKS. END SUMMARY.

2. OVER A PERIOD OF THREE DAYS, NOVEMBER 1-4, 2002, REPRESENTATIVES DRAWN FROM GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN JORDAN, EGYPT, MOROCCO, TUNISIA, BAHRAIN, YEMEN, LEBANON, THE WEST BANK AND EGYPT (GOVERNMENT AND NGO'S) WORKING WITH 6 AMERICAN EXPERTS FROM THE CENTER FOR CIVIC EDUCATION, DELIBERATED ON THE OBJECTIVES AND CRITERIA FOR AN ARAB CIVITAS NETWORK. DISCUSSIONS CENTERED ON FUTURE PROJECTS, TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND LINKAGES WITH EXISTING CIVIC EDUCATION ENTITIES IN EACH COUNTRY. PARTICIPANTS CONCLUDED THAT ARAB CIVITAS WILL BE BASED IN AMMAN AND WILL HAVE A BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND AN ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD. ITS MEMBERSHIP WILL BE OPEN TO ALL ARAB COUNTRIES. MS. MUNA DARWISH SHAMI OF JORDAN AND DR. KAMAL MUGEETH OF EGYPT WERE ASSIGNED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PUTTING TOGETHER THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKSHOP AND DRAFTING THE FINAL BY-LAWS AND OBJECTIVES OF ARAB CIVITAS IN A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 30 DAYS.

3. PA SEES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ARAB CIVITAS AS A CONDUIT TO INCREASED PROGRAMMING IN THE FIELDS OF CIVIC EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY. THE CENTER FOR CIVIC EDUCATION, WHICH PLAYED AN INSTRUMENTAL ROLE IN STARTING THIS PROJECT, HAS EXPRESSED KEEN INTEREST IN SUPPORTING ARAB CIVITAS IN THE FUTURE AND PLANS TO SUBMIT A FIVE YEAR FUNDING PROPOSAL TO USAID WASHINGTON FOR THIS PURPOSE. PA AND EMBASSY HIGHLY SUPPORT THIS REQUEST AND UNDERScore THE IMPORTANCE AND TIMELINESS OF THIS INITIATIVE IN PROMOTING U.S. GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES ON CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE ARAB WORLD.

4. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, REPRESENTATIVES OF CHILDREN'S RESOURCE INTERNATIONAL, A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHED TO PROMOTE QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES IN THE U.S. AND ABROAD, PRESENTED A PROPOSAL TO IMPLEMENT A NEW ACTIVE TEACHING METHOD SUPPORTING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PRESCHOOL (KG) AND LATER IN PRIMARY GRADES. JORDAN IS JUST CONSIDERING INTRODUCING KG AS PART OF ITS "MANDATORY" EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND AS OF NEXT YEAR IT IS HOPED THAT IT WILL BE APPLIED IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS. OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION ARE LOOKING IN THIS DIRECTION AS WELL.

5. PA BELIEVES THAT THIS INITIATIVE COULD BE IMPLEMENTED AS PART OF THE ARAB CIVITAS NETWORK ACTIVITIES THROUGH SPECIAL FUNDING. PA WILL REVIEW MATERIALS REPRESENTED BY CHILDREN'S RESOURCES INTERNATIONAL AND WILL CONFER WITH JORDANIAN MINISTER OF EDUCATION DR. KHALED TOUQAN, WHO HAS GIVEN HIS SUPPORT TO ARAB CIVITAS BY ATTENDING THE OPENING SESSION WITH THE AMBASSADOR, GIVING A PRESENTATION AND BY ATTENDING MOST OF THE DELIBERATIONS ON THE FIRST DAY. DR. TOUQAN IS KEEN TO PROMOTE EDUCATION REFORM EFFORTS INCLUDING THIS INITIATIVE.

6. PA WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING CIVIC EDUCATION IN JORDAN THROUGH ARAB CIVITAS AND OTHER PROJECTS THAT WILL EMERGE AS A RESULT OF THIS MILESTONE ACCOMPLISHMENT. GNEHM